

signed at a time of political upheaval, politicians are now regretting them.

THE \$50BN BONANZA FOR U.S. COMPANIES
PIECING A BROKEN IRAQ TOGETHER

The task of rebuilding a shattered Iraq has gone mainly to U.S. companies.

As well as contractors to restore the infrastructure, such as its water, electricity and gas networks, a huge number of companies have found lucrative work supporting the ongoing coalition military presence in the country. Other companies have won contracts to restore Iraq's media; its schools and hospitals; its financial services industry; and, of course, its oil industry.

In May 2003, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), part of the U.S. Department of Defence, created the Project Management Office in Baghdad to oversee Iraq's reconstruction.

In June 2004 the CPA was dissolved and the Iraqi interim government took power. But the U.S. maintained its grip on allocating contracts to private companies. The management of reconstruction projects was transferred to the Iraq Reconstruction and Management Office, a division of the U.S. Department of State, and the Project and Contracting Office, in the Department of Defence.

The largest beneficiary of reconstruction work in Iraq has been KBR (Kellogg, Brown & Root), a division of U.S. giant Halliburton, which to date has secured contracts in Iraq worth \$13bn (£7bn), including an uncontested \$7bn contract to rebuild Iraq's oil infrastructure. Other companies benefiting from Iraq contracts include Bechtel, the giant U.S. conglomerate, BearingPoint, the consultant group that advised on the drawing up of Iraq's new oil legislation, and General Electric. According to the U.S.-based Centre for Public Integrity, 150-plus U.S. companies have won contracts in Iraq worth over \$50bn.

30,000—Number of Kellogg, Brown and Root employees in Iraq.

36—The number of interrogators employed by Caci, a U.S. company, that have worked in the Abu Ghraib prison since August 2003.

\$12.1bn—UN's estimate of the cost of rebuilding Iraq's electricity network.

\$2 trillion—Estimated cost of the Iraq war to the U.S., according to the Nobel prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz.

COMMENTS ON WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. KELLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss the war in Iraq. I oppose the surge. We don't need more American troops caught in the cross-hairs of a civil war. After nearly 4 years, it is high time for the Iraqis to send in their own troops to take out the Shia militias and the Sunni insurgents.

In short, the problem in Iraq is that we are losing nearly 100 American lives every month, and we are spending \$2 billion a week. The solution is not to lose even more lives and to spend even more money.

I approach this subject with a great deal of humility, and it is not my intention to micro-manage this war. I am merely a Member of Congress and not a four-star general. But I have listened to what the most well-respected four-star generals in the United States have

to say about this matter, and Generals Abizaid, Casey and Colin Powell have all said that sending another surge of troops into Iraq is not the answer.

I am terribly concerned about interjecting American troops into the middle of civil war violence. Who do they shoot at? The Sunni? The Shia? One thing we know is that 61 percent of Iraqis approve of violent attacks against our own U.S. troops. Does that sound like a grateful country to you?

Thanks to our brave American troops, Saddam Hussein and al-Zarqawi are dead, the Iraqi people have had three Democratic elections and three-fourths of the senior al Qaeda operatives have been killed or captured. And yet 61 percent of Iraqis want to kill American troops, and 79 percent of Iraqis have a mostly negative view of the United States.

The American people have paid the ultimate price for this war, and now is not the time to escalate the tragedy even further. The Iraq war has lasted longer than World War II. It has claimed more American lives than the attacks of 9/11, and it has cost more money than the Vietnam War.

The military action this Congress authorized in 2002 was for a far different purpose than the war we face today. I voted to authorize the use of force because I did not want Saddam Hussein to give weapons of mass destruction to al Qaeda. Now Saddam Hussein is dead, and there are no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

Why did we stay in Iraq? Because we wanted the Iraqi people to have a unified and secure government so that Iraq would not become a haven for terrorists, like what happened to Afghanistan after Russia pulled out.

Unfortunately, the Iraqi government has provided neither unity nor security. After nearly 4 years, the Iraqis still have not achieved reconciliation, still have not decided how to share oil revenues and still have not dealt with the militias and the insurgents.

For example, 80 percent of the sectarian violence in Iraq is within a 30-mile radius of Baghdad, yet despite the fact that the Iraqi security forces outnumber the al-Sadr militia by a ratio of 5-1, that is 300,000 versus 60,000, the Maliki government has still not taken action to take out Moqtada al-Sadr and his militia.

In his speech, President Bush tells us that he emphasized the importance of benchmarks with Prime Minister Maliki. Unfortunately, the Iraqi government has a pattern of not fulfilling its promises with regard to benchmarks.

For example, when I was in Iraq in May of last year, the Iraqi government officials told me they would be able to provide security for themselves by December of 2006. Now they are saying they hope to have their own security in place by December of 2007.

Similarly, the U.S. surged the number of troops in Baghdad last summer from 7,500 to 15,000 to take out the in-

surgents. But the Iraqi government reneged on its promise to provide Iraqi troops, and, as a result, the insurgents came right back after we left.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the motives of President Bush and other prominent leaders, such as John McCain, who are pushing for more troops are pure and well meaning. I believe they sincerely think this is the best way forward. Three years ago, I would have agreed with them. However, at this late stage, interjecting more young American troops into the crossfire of an Iraqi civil war is simply not the right approach. We are not going to solve an Iraqi political problem with an American military solution.

In closing, regardless of how one feels about the war in Iraq or the proposed surge in troops, as long as our American troops are in harm's way, it is our duty and responsibility to support these troops 100 percent.

May God bless our troops and our country.

CONFRONTING REALITY IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. Mr. Speaker, yesterday's decision by President Bush to escalate the U.S. troop commitment in Iraq will not bring stability to Baghdad. It will not ameliorate the growing civil war in Iraq. A troop increase will not result in a more rapid exit for the more than 130,000 American troops serving there, many of them on their third or fourth tour in Iraq. And worst of all, it makes apparent that the President has paid little heed to the bipartisan Iraq Study Group, a multitude of experts, both civilian and military, the Congress and, most importantly, an overwhelming majority of the American people.

For a long time, many of us have been calling for a new way forward in Iraq, and the White House billed last night's speech as a dramatic departure from current policy. But while the rhetoric may have been different, the plan outlined by the President was more of the same, and he clearly intends to stay the course. This is a position that I believe is unwise and that I strongly oppose.

I will support a resolution of disapproval, and I am willing to explore other options to force the President to truly change policy in Iraq.

In his remarks, the President told us that failure in Iraq is unacceptable, but his prosecution of the war has made success in Iraq recede further and further from our reach. The latest escalation is another in a long series of poor decisions by the administration that have cost the lives of so many brave and dedicated troops, cost American taxpayers more than \$350 billion and left Iraq in chaos. Shiites and Sunnis who once lived in integrated neighborhoods in Baghdad are slaughtering each other now at a terrifying

pace. Iraqis spend 16 of every 24 hours without electricity.

Rather than sending additional troops to combat the insurgency, we should begin to responsibly redeploy our forces in Iraq while redoubling our efforts to train and equip Iraqi forces to provide their own security, an effort which is at the very heart of the Iraq Study Group recommendations for bolstering security in Iraq.

President Bush rightly characterized the most recent pushes to stabilize Baghdad, Operation Together Forward and Operation Together Forward II, as unsuccessful, because there were not enough Iraqi forces to hold areas cleared by American troops. But the President's assertion that we will now be able to rely on 18 Iraqi army and police brigades to shoulder much of the burden in a new offensive in Baghdad is clearly at odds with reality.

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The Iraqi Army has not distinguished itself in combat. And four of the six battalions that were deployed to the capital last summer failed to show up at all.

The Iraqi police, which are under the control of the Ministry of the Interior, have been heavily infiltrated by Shiite militias and death squads and cannot be expected to take on Shiite extremists as Prime Minister Malaki has pledged. There is little support for an escalated American military presence in Iraq. American military commanders do not see an increase as improving the security situation on the ground, and the strain of multiple deployments has seriously eroded our capacity to respond to other contingencies should the need arise.

The American people, Democrats and Republicans alike, do not support an increase in the troop strength in Iraq. Perhaps most important of all, the Iraqis do not want more American troops in Iraq. In fact, if there is one thing that unites Iraqis, it is the desire that American forces should not remain indefinitely.

Furthermore, by continuing to bear the brunt of the fighting against insurgents, foreign fighters, and militias, the United States has fostered a dangerous dependence that has slowed efforts to have Iraqis shoulder the burden of defending their own country and government.

Even as we focus our military efforts on training Iraqi security forces, we need to push the Sunnis and Shiites to make the political compromises that are the necessary precondition to any reconciliation process. I have been arguing for more than 2 years that the struggle in Iraq is primarily a political one. The Iraq Study Group and numerous outside experts have also pressed the administration to force the Iraqi Government to make the hard decisions on power sharing, minority rights, and the equitable distribution of oil revenues that could help quell the Sunni insurgency and undermine

support for Shiite maximalists like Mukkada al Sadr.

I also believe the United States must work to convene a regional conference to support Iraq's bringing together its neighborhoods to find ways to stem the flow of weapons and foreign fighters into Iraq and to pursue common strategies in support of reconstruction and political reconciliation efforts.

There is hard evidence that Iran is facilitating the flow of weapons, trainers, and intelligence to Shiite militias in a bid to assert greater control over its neighbor. At the same time, the long and porous Syrian border has continued to be a transit point for foreign jihadis who have carried out some of the spectacular and devastating attacks on U.S. troops and Iraqi civilians.

Finally, our efforts in Iraq cannot be pursued in a vacuum. We need to do more to engage the Arab and Muslim world, and there must be a renewed effort to start peace negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. This week's passage of the 9/11 implementation bill included excellent proposals for buttressing our leadership by improving our communication of ideas and communication in the Muslim world and by expanding U.S. scholarship exchange and other programs in Muslim countries.

Mr. Speaker, failure is unacceptable, but so is staying the course. I hope and expect that the debate we are going to have, the first real debate we have had in years, will convince the President to listen to those who are calling for a new way forward and not more of the same.

A TRIBUTE TO ROBERT ADERHOLT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. ADERHOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ADERHOLT. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to congratulate, pay tribute, and honor a great jurist who has served on the bench for over 40 years in his home State of Alabama.

Born on December 6, 1935, to Ruby and Jesse Clifton, he grew up in Winston County, Alabama, and graduated from Haleyville High School in 1954. He pursued his undergraduate degree at Birmingham-Southern College. Thereafter, he attended the Cumberland School of Law in Lebanon, Tennessee, and obtained his law degree from the University of Alabama School of Law.

As a young attorney, he joined the faculty at the Cumberland School of Law, which by that time had moved from Lebanon, Tennessee, to Birmingham, Alabama, which is known today as Samford University. It was during this time that he authored, along with Professor Sam B. Gilreath, Caruther's "History of a Lawsuit," eighth edition.

In 1958, he married his high school sweetheart, Mary Frances Brown, and they have been married for over 48

years. They have one son, who is married to the former Caroline McDonald and, two grandchildren, Mary Elliott and Robert Hayes.

In 1962, he began serving as judge of the Court of Law and Equity in Winston County and served there until 1973. Then in 1977, he took office as one of two judges serving the 25th Judicial Circuit in the Alabama court system and has remained on the bench for 30 years.

He has served the public for more than 40 years and has presided over each case that has come before him with integrity and with impartiality. He is someone who has a brilliant legal mind; but most important, he has compassion for all individuals, regardless of their background or their social standing.

He is a man of faith, prayer, and integrity, who has a great love for his family, his country and his God. He has taken his job seriously from the first day he stepped up to the bench to preside. In addition to his responsibilities on the bench, he has been a businessman and has pastored Fairview Congregational Church in Hackleburg, Alabama, for over 40 years.

Mr. Speaker, I know all these things to be true about this individual and his character and his reputation because I personally observed him. Many times Members don't always have that kind of perspective when they come to the floor. I can say these things in all truthfulness as I stand here on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives because this man, the judge I am talking about, Bobby Aderholt, is my dad.

GAS PRICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to commend the new Democratic Congress which will finally address high energy prices.

Many Americans have a hard time understanding what often seems like arbitrary reasons for fluctuations in gas prices. As the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, I look forward to bringing transparency to the oil and gas markets to clarify their effect on gas prices.

A recent example of confusing market behavior was in September and October of 2006, just before the November elections. Gas prices dropped an average of 60 cents per gallon. This 60-cent drop in gas prices occurred despite the fact that there were pipeline disruptions in Alaska and indications that OPEC would cut oil production.

While gas prices dropped 60 cents a gallon in September and October, crude prices only dropped 10 cents. For years, the American Petroleum Institute, API, the oil companies' main lobbying group, spent millions of dollars on public relations campaigns convincing the